

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1043

By Ford

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Harley “Skeeter” Swift for his outstanding accomplishments during his legendary basketball career.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is pleased to specially honor and commend those successful athletes who, through their magnificent exploits, bring honor to the State of Tennessee and serve as exceptional ambassadors of this State; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee has been blessed by a bounty of tremendous athletes and championship athletic teams, both amateur and professional, who have proudly represented the citizens of this State as honorable competitors; and

WHEREAS, one such exemplary athlete is Harley “Skeeter” Swift, whose indomitable life, legendary basketball career, and his indelible accomplishments and contributions to the sport of basketball are clearly deserving of recognition by this legislative body; and

WHEREAS, in 1961, Skeeter Swift began his basketball career at George Washington High School in Alexandria, Virginia, and by the time he graduated in 1965, he was a highly touted high school All-American point guard; and

WHEREAS, after earning a full basketball scholarship from East Tennessee State University (ETSU), he starred on the collegiate level from 1965 until 1969, earning Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) Freshman of the Year honors in 1965, All-OVC first team honors 1966 through 1969, OVC Player of the Year honors as a senior in 1969, and he made the college All-American team in 1969; and

WHEREAS, as a 6’3” All-American point guard, Mr. Swift excelled at his position, and he still cherishes the many memorable moments during his collegiate career, including winning the 1968 OVC championship, ETSU’s 1968 Sweet Sixteen NCAA appearance, and the 1969 game

against Duke University; posting 20 points in the game, he helped lead ETSU to an upset victory over the 2<sup>nd</sup> ranked Duke Blue Devils; and

WHEREAS, in honor of his exceptional collegiate career, Skeeter Swift was inducted into the ETSU Hall of Fame in 1982; he had his #54 basketball jersey officially retired in 1990 and was recently honored in February of this year in a special awards ceremony at halftime of the ETSU v. USC basketball game, a most deserving recognition of his outstanding accomplishments as a student-athlete; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, Mr. Swift chose to play with the New Orleans Bucs organization in the American Basketball Association (ABA) as the number two draft pick overall; he was also the number three draft choice in the National Basketball Association (NBA) with the Milwaukee Bucks; prior to reporting to the New Orleans Bucs to start his professional career, he played in the 1969 Tennessee-Kentucky All-Star game, earning Most Valuable Player (MVP) honors for his stellar play; and

WHEREAS, during his illustrious professional basketball career, Skeeter Swift played with several ABA organizations, including the New Orleans Bucs, the Memphis Pros, the Pittsburg Condors, and the Dallas Chaps; when the ABA and the NBA merged, the Dallas Chaps moved to San Antonio, Texas, and Skeeter Swift finished his professional career with the NBA's San Antonio Spurs organization; and

WHEREAS, amassing over 3,000 career points during his professional career, Mr. Swift holds several records and earned numerous honors, including being named to the All-Rookie team in 1969-1970, leading the ABA in three-point field goal percentage and number of assists, and is one of the ABA's all-time top ten free throw shooters; and

WHEREAS, after retiring in 1976 from his professional basketball career, Skeeter Swift began a stellar prep basketball coaching career with Oak Hill Academy; while coaching at Oak Hill Academy, he was named Coach of the Year in 1979 after the team finished 36-0 and won the high school national championship; he left Oak Hill Academy after four seasons with a 61-1 record and had short coaching stints with Rogersville and Elizabethton; and

WHEREAS, he has also committed his singular skills to several community organizations, volunteering his time and energies to a number of worthy foundations, including

the Boys and Girls Club and the South Central Kingsport Community Development Corporation; he has also held a number of charity basketball clinics at several area recreation centers and gymnasiums, and in April of 2010, he will be honored with a special award from the City of Alexandria Detention Center for his many altruistic and charitable efforts, serving as a mentor and role model while helping troubled individuals turn their lives around; and

WHEREAS, as a testament to his athletic prowess and many talents, Mr. Swift has been awarded numerous honors throughout his career, including the Alexandria Sportsman Club Basketball Player of the Year, the Alexandria Olympic Boys and Girls Club Distinguished Alumni Award, and he was inducted into the Alexandria Sportsman Club Hall of Fame, the Northeast Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, and his recent induction in February of this year into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame; he was also honored by the 106<sup>th</sup> Tennessee General Assembly by a Senate Joint Resolution recognizing his lauded career and many accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, an esteemed individual with a remarkable life story, over sixty newspaper articles and press columns have been written about him, and his biography *Skeeter*, which details his legendary exploits, is currently set for publication in the Fall of this year; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Mr. Swift is most appreciative of the love and support of his wife, Demetria, and his children, Scott, Steve, Susan, and Stephanie; and

WHEREAS, Skeeter Swift, a man of true character and commitment, exemplifies dedication and leadership, and he is admired by his fellow Tennesseans for his tireless efforts to excel, always guided by solid principles and high standards, whether in the athletic arena or in the actions of his daily life; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and recognize Harley "Skeeter" Swift for his outstanding accomplishments during his legendary basketball career, commend him for his substantial legacy as an athlete, and wish him every success in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.